Statements of Outrage Over the Supreme Court's Abortion Ruling

HIV, LGBTQ and civil rights groups condemn the ruling that overturns *Roe v. Wade* and undermines other rights.

June 24, 2022 By Trent Straube

As many expected, the Supreme Court overruled Roe v. Wade and ended the constitutional right to abortion, meaning that states and even Congress could outlaw the procedure. Indeed, five states—Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Wisconsin—immediately enacted bans. Several others will do so in the upcoming days.

Announced Friday, June 24, the opinion for Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization strips away rights that have been upheld for nearly half a century. The ruling was based on the idea that the right to an abortion is not found in the Constitution and that it is not included in the liberties protected by the due process clause of the 14th Amendment.

In their written opinions, some justices claimed the ruling should not be applied to other issues. Justice Clarence Thomas, however, spelled out cases in which the rationale for overturning abortion rights could be applied. Notably, as The New York Times reports, Thomas took aim at the right to contraception, same-sex marriage and private sexual acts, such as sodomy.

Is it a stretch to worry that Thomas and likeminded others will take aim at HIV prevention and care, sex education or a number of other private medical issues? As of Friday afternoon, numerous HIV, LGBTQ, civil rights and health care organizations released statements about the Supreme Court ruling ending the right to abortion. Below is a roundup of press releases and quotes. As more statements are issued, we will update the list—putting the most recent at the top—so please check back.

Lambda Legal, a nonprofit legal defense group that fights for HIV and LGBTQ communities:

> "The damage wrought by today's ruling is incalculable. As we warned when a draft was leaked in May, people will die as a result of this ruling. More than half the states are already poised to ban or at least severely restrict abortion access, forcing patients to travel hundreds of miles out of state or to continue pregnancies against their will. Officials in some states have even suggested they will move to prevent pregnant people from leaving. We are seeing the threat

> of a radical, totalitarian state more and more resembling Gilead of The Handmaid's Tale. If we want to retain any shred of gender equality and personal freedom, every one of us must raise our voices and engage.

> "Abortion bans reflect and reinforce deeply harmful stereotypes about women, and the relative value attached to their lives. Such bans impact not only cisgender heterosexual women, but LGBTQI+ people, too, whether they are seeking abortion or not. Allowing governments to deprive people of their dignity, autonomy over their own bodies, and the ability to make fundamental decisions that determine the course of their lives because of 'deeply rooted' gender stereotypes under the guise of respecting 'history and tradition' will lead to the further marginalization of LGBTQI+ people by statehouses across the country and the entrenchment of white cisgender male supremacy."

The LGBTQ Victory Fund, which supports openly LGBTQ elected officials:

> "This assault on our fundamental freedoms by a Supreme Court willing to choose politics over precedent will cost lives and will disproportionately affect access to critical reproductive health care for people of color and low-income communities. It may also have cascading effects on legal cases pertaining to the LGBTQ community, especially for trans and nonbinary people as they face an unprecedented increase in legal and legislative attacks.
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> "Our nation must confront the devastating reality that we can no longer rely on the Court to protect our most basic rights. Lawmakers must now determine what freedoms we have and which we don't for the foreseeable future. We call on policymakers in all branches and at all levels of government to use every tool available to fight to keep abortion legal and accessible."

National League for Nursing:

> "The Supreme Court has struck a blow to U.S. public health…. The result will inevitably be a patchwork of laws that will disproportionately negatively impact people of color and those on the economic margins of society, including rural Americans who already travel great distances for medical care…. The resulting health inequity can only exacerbate crises of public health traced directly to social determinants of health the National League for Nursing has pledged to help eradicate wherever possible.

Amida Care, a nonprofit health plan in New York catering to the LGBTQ community and people living with HIV, experiencing homelessness or dealing with other complex conditions:

> "The decision in Dobbs v. Jackson represents one of the most damaging setbacks to human rights in our country's history…. While we are proud that New York is a national leader in human rights and access to health care and a safe haven for those seeking to access a full

> spectrum of reproductive health care, in at least 15 states across the country, this [Supreme Court] decision will trigger abortion bans. These archaic laws will undoubtedly hit low-income communities and communities of color the hardest.
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> "The right to bodily autonomy is—and must remain—a fundamental right. The right to a full spectrum of sexual wellness and reproductive health care is also a fundamental right. These rights are at the very core of our mission and are essential to our efforts to end the HIV epidemic and advance gender equity."

The Los Angeles LGBT Center:

> "As the world's largest provider of services to the LGBTQ community, we know access to abortion is basic health care for many members of our community. The Supreme Court's decision erodes basic human rights. It creates more barriers to health care—threatening the lives and well-being of those attempting to access an abortion.
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> "If the Supreme Court can overturn established law like Roe v. Wade, the reversal of marriage equality and other rights could also be reversed. We call on Congress to act to pass the Equality Act and federal legislation to make abortion legal throughout the United States."

The Alliance for Justice, a national association of over 130 groups committed to equitable, just and free society:

> "Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization will be remembered in the same vein as Dred Scott v. Stafford, Plessy v. Ferguson, Korematsu v. United States, and Bowers v. Hardwick as a dreadful stain on our nation's history. For the first time ever, the Supreme Court has rescinded a recognized constitutional right.
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> "It cannot be overstated how damaging this ruling will be to the most vulnerable members of our society, particularly people of color.… Those with the necessary finances will still be able to access abortion services, so this ruling will primarily harm those without the resources needed to travel to other states to seek legal abortions.
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> "We are supposed to be a nation of laws, not men. By that simple standard, today's decision is profoundly un-American; it is a willful and reckless assertion of power based on a simple fact: The conservatives have more votes, so law and reason are irrelevant. The Court has violated its oath to protect and defend the Constitution."

NMAC (formerly the National Minority AIDS Council):

> “NMAC strongly condemns the overturning of Roe V. Wade. This decision will have a disastrous effect on health care for women, particularly women of color. Make no mistake, this decision directly targets marginalized Americans, particularly poor women of color. It also sets a very dangerous precedent of allowing lawmakers to make intensely personal decisions for women.
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> “We have no doubt that the conservative supermajority on the court will not stop with Roe.… At this sorrowful time for Americans who believe in reproductive freedoms, this is not a time to lose hope.”

AIDS United, a national nonprofit focused on HIV policy:

> “The Supreme Court made a grave error today.… We should also all fear that the decision provides the framework for overturning dozens of precedents and laws related to privacy and personal liberty.
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> “Whether or not a person chooses to have an abortion or not is a private health decision that should be between an individual, their faith and their health care provider. Those of us living with HIV know that private health decisions are personal and should be protected not destroyed or made by legislators or, worse, the courts. This decision strikes at the heart of privacy and creates a frightening chilling effect.”

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